Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0005] with the following amended paragraph:

[0005]   Depending on the particular type of input stream, a single character may be the subject of the recognition procedures, or several characters may be combined together into a character string that is to be recognized. The recognition process may occur using various well-known ~~well-know~~ technologies. For example, with optical character recognition technology, a scanner is used to scan the light and dark areas of a character on the input piece and generate a corresponding digital representation of that character. In magnetic character recognition, a magnetic reader or sensor is used to create a digital representation of characters printed with magnetic ink.

Please replace paragraph [0007] with the following amended paragraph:

[0007]   Manufacturers ~~Manufactures~~ of character recognition engines have adopted various techniques to improve character recognition results. Existing techniques, however, have significant limitations. For example, one known technique is to generate multiple character possibilities for each potentially ambiguous character being recognized. A probability or confidence indication is then assigned to each result possibility. The character with the highest confidence is then selected for the result output. While this technique can improve results in some circumstances, it is typically not helpful in situations that require distinguishing between very similar characters (such as the uppercase letter "O" and the digit "0," or the uppercase letter "I," the digit "1," and the lowercase letter "l"). Each of these similar characters may have very similar, if not identical, confidence indications. Simply picking the highest probability character does not always result in a correct result string.

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